

REMOTE STORAGE
REMOTE

THE
ALCESTIS OF EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

The Class of 1900 of Beloit College

REVISED BY

The Committee on Publication of 1908

FOR

The Twenty-first Annual Rendition
of the Classical Department.

That strangest, saddest, sweetest song.

—Robert Browning

Beloit Daily Free Press Print
1908

Complements of
Theodore Lyman Wright

de Nieuwland
Adriaan van

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REMOTE STORAGE

THE ALCESTIS OF EURIPIDES

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| APOLLO, the Sun-god..... | F. J. Platt |
| DEATH | W. D. Wollesen |
| ALCESTIS, queen of Pherae | Natalie Thornton |
| ADMETUS, king of Pherae | H. A. Arnold |
| EUMELUS, their son | Master Ned Worthington |
| Their daughter | Miss Elizabeth Fox |
| HERACLES, guest of Admetus | E. C. Porter |
| PHERES, aged father of Admetus | F. W. Traner |
| Wife of Pheres | Edith Emery |
| THERAPON (a man-servant) | A. H. Richardson |
| THERAPAINA (a maid-servant) | Charlotte Richardson |
| CHORAGUS | C. W. Howe |
| CORYPHAEI | W. F. Ayer and F. H. Millett |

CHORUS OF CITIZENS OF PHERAE—

Messrs. Brace, Eddy, Gaines, C. W. Howe, E. Howe,
Howell, Lentzner, Northrop, Powers, Putnam, Rife,
L. H. Riggs, R. I. Riggs, Shepard, Spooner.

THE QUEEN'S ATTENDANTS—

Misses Adams, Arthur, Douglass, G. M. Hubbard,
K. W. Miller, Richards, Rowntree, DeWitt.

THE KING'S ATTENDANTS—

Messrs. Boutwell, Bunge, Brandt, Coonradt, Schurman,
Zeininger.

PHERES' ATTENDANTS—

Messrs. Brown, Candy, Jeffris, Nilson, Mitchell,
Schmidt.

ATTENDANTS OF PHERES' WIFE—

Misses Nellie Myers and Clarke.

HARP

FLUTE

CLARINET

Miss Della M. Sehrt

Leslie Hammill, ex-'09

Paul Nilson, '11.

P 54954

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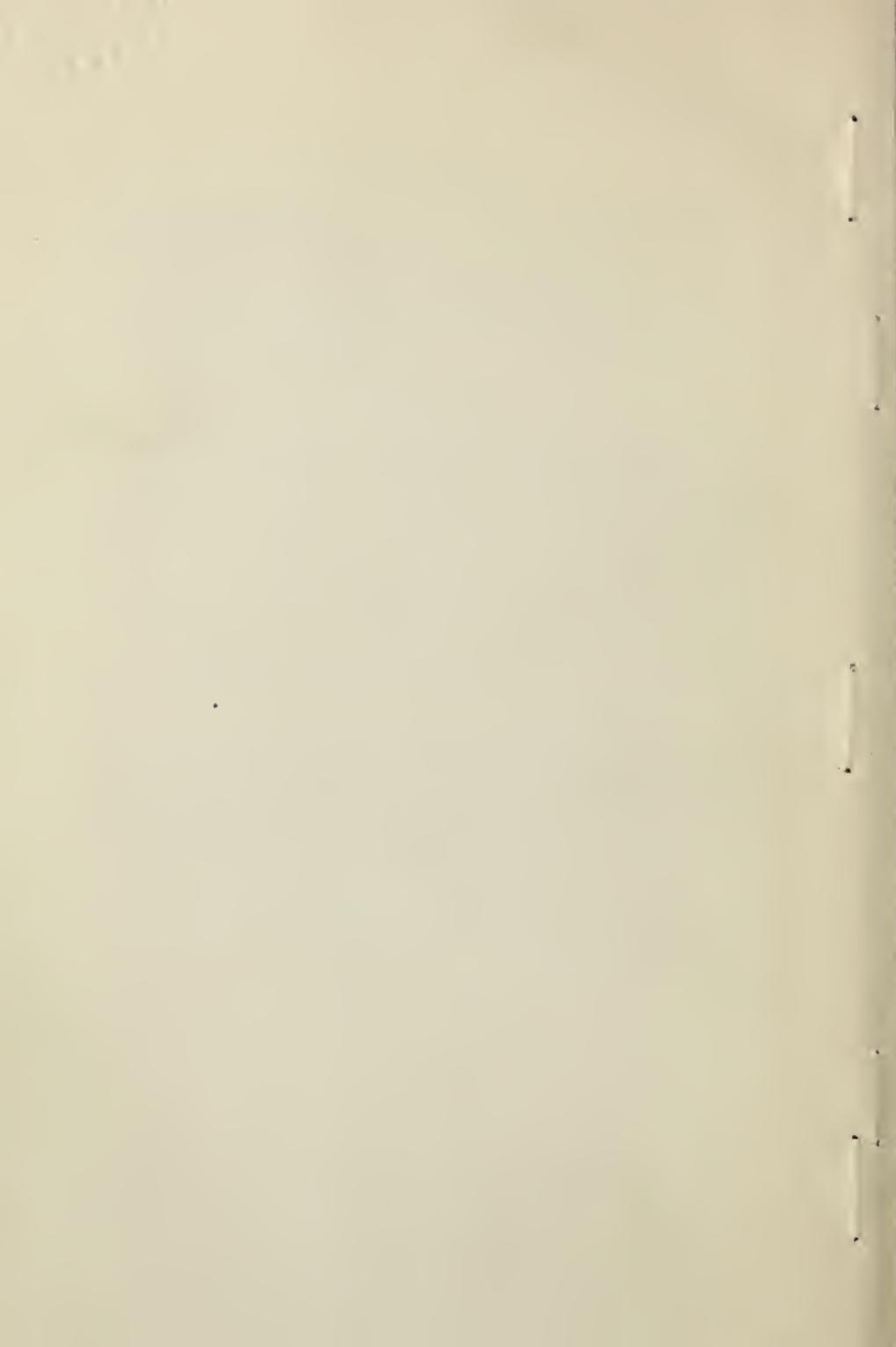
NOTE—The music used on this occasion is that composed by Chas. Harford Lloyd for the performance at Oxford University, England, in 1887. It was on that occasion sung in the original Greek, and the translation now sung was made by the same composer, differing therefore from the paraphrases printed in this libretto.

ARGUMENT.

Admetus, King of Pherae, in Thessaly, once kindly received Apollo, when that god was for a while banished from Olympus and compelled to be a servant to a mortal. Afterwards, when the king was sick and at the point of death, Apollo won the consent of the Fates that the King's life should be spared, provided that some one could be found to die in his stead. His father, his mother, and his friends declined to save him thus; but his wife, Alcestis, offered to die for the sake of her husband.

The drama opens with the approach of Death to claim his victim.

Just after Alcestis has died, when the funeral rites are in progress, Heracles arrives in Pherae, journeying toward Thrace upon one of his labors. Admetus receives him hospitably, hiding his own cause of grief, letting Heracles suppose that some stranger's funeral is in progress. When Heracles learns from a servant that it is Alcestis who has died, he goes to the tomb, wrestles with Death, recovers Alcestis, and in his own crafty style restores her to the happy king.



ALCESTIS

SCENE.—The Grove in front of the Palace of Admetus.

PROLOGUE

Enter APOLLO

APOLLO. O palace of Admetus, where I deigned,
Although a god, to take a servant's fare!
When Zeus slew Aesculapius, my son,
By hurling on his breast the thunder-bolt,
Then I, enraged, the mighty Cyclops slew,
Who forge for Zeus his awful thunderbolts.
In punishment for that, my father bade
That I should serve for hire with mortal men.
So coming to this land I tended herds
In King Admetus' hospitable realm
And have preserved his house until today,
Since Pheres' son I found a godly man,
Whose holiness was equal to my own;
And him I saved from death by cheating fate.
The Fates allowed me this: that King Admetus
Should have escape from his impending death
If he could find a soul to take his place.
But having tried and tested all his friends,
His aged father and his mother too,
He found not one to suffer death for him
And view life's light no more,—except his wife.
So now within the house she breathes her last
Supported in the arms of weeping friends;
For fate decreed that she should die today.
So, lest upon me in this home should come
The stains of death, I leave its sheltering roof,—
But nay,—near by I see the form of Death,
The priest of the dead, intent on bearing down
The queen to Hades' realms. Meet time is this

For him to come, since he observes this day
On which 'tis destined that Alcestis die.

Enter DEATH.

DEATH. Ho! Ho! Ha! Ha!

Why art thou, O Apollo, still lingering here
At the front of the palace? My heart hath its fear
Thou wouldest limit the rights of the gods of the
dead,
And stay the dread sway of our dooms and our
dread.

'Tis enough that thy meddling protected Admetus,
Once cheating the Fates in thy zeal to defeat us;
Yet now still again with thy hand on thy bow
Thou wouldest rescue Alcestis who promised to go
To her death in the stead of Admetus.

AP. Fear not! Know well my cause is just and clear.
DEA. What need of weapons if thy cause is just?
AP. It is my custom thus to bear this bow.
DEA. It is thy custom thus to aid this King!
AP. I sorrow at the sorrows of my friend.
DEA. But wilt thou rob me of a second corpse?
AP. By force I never took thy dead from thee.
DEA. How is it then Admetus still lives on?
AP. He gave Alcestis as his substitute.
DEA. Whom I am come to carry to my depths.
AP. Take her and go, I doubt of thy consent—
DEA. To slay them whom I ought? That is my right!
AP. Nay, rather slay the old whose race is run.
DEA. I know thy logic and detect thy wish.
AP. Tell me:—how may Alcestis reach old age?
DEA. She never can! My honors please me too.
AP. At most thou takest but the single life.
DEA. I gain more glory when the youthful die.
AP. But aged wives receive more pomp at death.
DEA. Thou suitest my laws, O Phoebus, to the rich.
AP. Old Death is shrewder than I thought he was!
DEA. The rich would buy the chance of dying old.

AP. Then wilt thou buy my deepest gratitude?
 DEA. Nay, I will not; thou know'st my old-time ways—
 AP. Yes, ways detested by both gods and men!
 DEA. Thou canst not have all things thou oughtst
 not have.
 AP. But yield thou shalt, though cruel be thy heart;
 A man of strength approacheth Pheres' halls,
 Sent by his master to the land of Thrace,
 Snow-capped and cold, to bring for Eurystheus
 thence
 A prize of chariot and horses twain.
 He, while a guest within Admetus' house,
 By force shall wrest this woman from thy grasp.
 Still thou wilt not deserve our grateful thanks;
 Thou dost thine ugly part and winnest my hate!
 DEA. Too long thou art talking, nor shalt gain thereby.
 To Hades' halls this woman shall descend.
 I go for her; my sword begins its work;
 That life is sacred to the gods of death
 Whose head and hair this blade shall consecrate.

Kneife
(Exeunt.)

PARODOS. [Entry of the Chorus.]

STROPHE A.

CHO. What means this silence everywhere?
 Admetus' house is still.
 No friend of ours comes forth to bear
 The news of good or ill.
 We know not if Alcestis lives
 And sees the light of life,
 Or if the King already grieves
 For his devoted wife.

ANTISTROPHE A.

Canst hear the sound of wailing shrill
 Or hands that tear the hair?
 Oh Healing-God, arise and still

The storm of our despair!
 Alcestis' spirit is not fled!
 How know ye more than we?
 We see no honors for the dead
 In due solemnity.

STROPHE B.

There are no signs of Hades there,
 No lustral vase to stand
 Before the door, nor tress of hair,
 Nor din of mourner's hand.
 And yet today is the fatal day!—
 What day? Sing on, we crave.
 The day she goes her lonely way
 To the dark and silent grave.

ANTISTROPHE B.

No messenger or ship can bring
 The drugs of foreign shore;
 The gods to whom we pray and sing
 Are merciful no more;
 For since the Son of Light delays
 In Hades' darkling rooms,
 No hopeful hand is reached to raise
 The fallen from their dooms.

FIRST EPISODE.

CHORUS-LEADER. But now a servant issues from the door.

(Enter a Maid-servant.)

She moans and weeps! What news am I to hear?
 'Tis pardonable to grieve if aught befalls
 Thy master or thy mistress. We would ask
 If still our lady lives, or is she dead.

MAID-SERVANT. She lives, and yet is dead, 'tis fair to say.

CH. How can the lady die and be alive?

MAID. Even now she bows her head and breathes her
 last.

CH. Then, wretched king, of what a wife bereft!
MAID. Until he suffers it, he cannot know.
CH. Is there no hope her life may yet be spared?
MAID. The fated day now presses on her hard.
CH. Are all the funeral draperies prepared?
MAID. Yes, all is ready for her burial-rites.
CH. Now let her know in dying she is far
The best and noblest woman 'neath our sun.
MAID-SERV. The best of women, surely, who disputes?
To rival her, what must a woman be?
How could wife better reverence her lord
Than by her willingness to die for him?
Now all our city knows Alcestis' love,
Yet hear and marvel at her homely ways:
For when she knew the fated day was here
She bathed her fair white skin in fountain floods
And, taking out her lovely draperies
From chests of cedar-wood, she robed herself;
Then stood before the household shrine and
prayed:
"Goddess, since now I go beneath the earth,
I kneel before thee with this last request—
This final favor—guard my orphaned ones.
For both of them secure a noble marriage,
And may they never share their mother's lot,
But both live out long lives of happiness
To die at last in their ancestral land."
To every altar in Admetus' house
She then approached. With leaves of myrtle
boughs
She garlanded them all. At each she prayed,
But did not weep, as yet, nor groan, nor change
Her sweet complexion for her fate's approach;
But in her chamber, prostrate on her couch,
Ah, there she shed her tears, and wept, and said:
"Oh couch where I gave up my maidenhood
For this man's sake for whose sake now I die,
Farewell—I hate thee not, I love thee—but—

" 'Tis only I—I feared my husband's death
 "And so for him I die and he lives on.
 "And thee, my couch, some other wife shall know,
 "Perhaps no truer but—more fortunate."
 She falls upon her couch and kisses it
 And sprinkles it with gushing tides of tears;
 Then, satiate with sobs, she staggers forth
 To leave the bed, but comes to it again
 And flings herself in faint prostration there.
 The children held their mother's gown and
 cried,
 Until the dying woman in her arms
 Clasped now the boy and now the girl in love.
 Meantime we servants pityingly wailed.
 She heard, and gave her hand to each to take—
 No slave of us too lowly in her sight
 To get and give the greetings of FAREWELL.

Such are the troubles in Admetus' palace;
 If he had died—why, he would just have died;
 But in escaping death he gains a sorrow
 That must abide on him forever more.

CH. Does King Admetus mourn in misery
 That he is robbed of such a noble wife?

MAID. Indeed he mourns. He holds her in his arms
 Beseeching that she leave him not,—in vain,
 For with disease she wastes away and dies;
 Her hands hang heavy and she scarcely breathes,
 But yet she wills to come into the sun
 To see once more its circle and its rays
 Before her palace door one dear last time.
 All men are not so loyal to their lords
 To make them kindly visits in distress.
 I recognize my master's year-long friends.

FIRST STASIMON. [Choral Song.]

STROPHE.

O Zeus! What release from these troubles can
 come?

What escape from misfortunes that cloud the king's home?

What word from within?
Must our mourning begin
With the shearing of tresses
And sweeping black dresses?

'Tis too certain,—too certain;—and yet, oh my friends,

Let us pray to the gods, for their power never ends:

Hear, Apollo, our cries,
And arise! and arise
To deliver the man,
As a god only can!

As before thou hast rescued our king from all harm,

So again smite dread Death with thy champion arm!

ANTISTROPHE.

Alas, son of Pheres, no voice shall refuse
To wail as thou wailest the wife thou must lose.

When we hear of her death
We would draw our last breath
With the noose or the knife,—
And an end to our life!

For now, oh Death-Day of our Queen, as thou nearest,

We call her not dear, but we call her the dearest!

But behold ye! Behold!
How the portals unfold
Where the queen and her king
Come forth while we sing:

"Lamentations!" and bid the whole city reply:

"Lamentations!" for her who is passing to die.

CH.LEADER. Knowing the past, we are constrained to sing:

Where are the pleasures that marriages bring?

Is not sorrow and sighing the usual thing?

Thus hard is the lot has befallen the king.
 He shall find, in the loss of so perfect a wife,
 That the life that he keeps has become—no life.

SECOND EPISODE.

Enter ALCESTIS, ADMETUS, EUMELUS, and attendants.

ALCESTIS. O Sun! Light of day!
 Swift cloud-whirls of sky!

ADM. The Sun sees thee and me, unhappy pair
 Who have done the gods no wrong—and yet thou
 diest.

ALC. Ah, Home far away!

A bride there was I!

ADM. Uplift thyself, poor wife, in fortitude;
 Beseech the powerful gods to pity thee.

ALC. Death's boat, lo, I see
 And a form at the oar.

It is Charon waits for me
 To ferry me o'er.

He calls: "Why delay?

Nay, on! Hasten on!"

With him, on my way,

I soon shall be gone.

ADM. A bitter boat-ride this you tell us of,
 Ill-fated wife; ah me, how deep our hurt!

ALC. To the Death-Halls below
 He leads—leads me weeping;
 His great eye-balls glow!
 His dark wings are sweeping!
 Unhand! Let me go!—
 Unfortunate and creeping
 My last path of woe!

ADM. Path piteous for thy friends, and more than all
 For me and for thy children, suffering here.

ALC. There! There! Let me lie;—
 My feet have no strength;
 The Death-god draws nigh;

And night comes at length
To make dark my eye.
And children—children mine—
You have no mother more!
But I pray Heaven to shine
Upon you, as before!

ADM. Ah me! sadder than death
I feel thy dying breath;
Thy farewell parting tone
Is leaving us alone.
I care not to live
When thou hast departed;
All life's praise I give
To thee, my true-hearted!

ALC. Admetus, since thou seest my dying state,
I long to tell my wishes ere I go.
To show devotion unto thee, I die,
Since for thy life mine own I give, and thou
Art left behind to see the light of days.
In doing this I honor thee, although
I might live on and get as husband one
Of the Thessalian lords I might desire;
And I might still be dwelling in a home
Made ever happy by its lordly wealth;
And yet I neither wished to live if torn
From thee, to see my little children left
As orphans desolate, nor spared my gifts
Of youth and grace in which I used to joy.
And yet thy father and thy mother too,
In selfish love of life, gave up their son
To death, though they had come unto the time
When their decease might seem appropriate,
And when their death might save their son and gain
Unto themselves a glorious renown;
For thou alone remainst to claim from them
A parent's care and love, and shouldst thou die
They never can have other manly sons.
If they had undertaken the sacrifice

Then thou and I together might live on
Our space of time and thou, alone, wouldest not
Be mourning for thy dying wife nor see
Thy children orphaned of a mother's care.
However, we should not complain. Some god
In heaven above has brought this thing to pass.
So let it be! But now I beg that thou
Remember to be grateful unto me,
And freely grant one favor for my sake.
I shall not ask such favor as I might
In my desert. I cannot ask thee that!
For nothing is as precious as one's life.
But my request is just, thou wilt confess,
For thou art fond of both our little ones
As I am,—if thy father-heart be true,
My wish is this: May these grow up to be
The lord and lady of our royal house.
No step-mother unkind to them wed thou,
Lest she, more rude than I, in envy lay
Harsh hands upon our children—thine and mine.
Oh, surely, thou wilt not do that, I beg,
For scarce so gentle as a viper comes
A step-mother to work her hostile spite
Upon the children of a former wife.

My boy, thou hast thy father for thy tower;
But oh, my girl, how, in thy maiden days,
Canst thou be blessed by her thy father weds,
Who would too surely scandalize thy fame
And wreck thy prospects in thy bloom of youth?
For never shall I deck thee as a bride
Nor comfort thee, my child, in child-birth pangs
Where naught counts kindly as a mother's care,
For I must die,—and not tomorrow,—nor
The next day,—nor the next day after that;—
Today I shall be named among the lost.
Farewell; be happy. Husband, thou canst boast
Thou hadst the best of women for thy wife,
And, children, ye have had the best of mothers.

CH.LEADER. Take heart; thy husband, I am bold to say,
Is not so foolish to dispute thy wishes.

ADM. It shall be as thou wishest; tremble not,
For since I had thee living, so in death
Thou, and thou only, shalt be called my wife.
No maid of Thessaly is good enough
In beauty or in rank to take thy place.
My children are enough; I pray in these
To find the happiness I miss in thee.
My grief for thee is not a year-long thing,
But lasting, lady, as my life shall last.
My father and my mother I will hate
For they were loving only in their talk;
But thou for me didst give the best thou hadst,
And life was spared to me, who am deprived
Of such a mate. What can I do but mourn?
An end to all convivial feasts, to wreaths
And to the songs which heretofore have pleased
My happy home! and may I never care
To touch the tuneful lyre, or lift my voice
To follow with the Libyan flute! My life
Will be devoid of joy, bereft of thee.

An image in thy likeness, made by men
Who know their art, upon thy couch I'll lay,
Then fall on it and clasp it in my arms
And call upon my wife's familiar name;
'Twill seem as though I had my arms around
My own dear love,—who lives no longer! Cold
The joy methinks, but yet it might assuage
My grief. Oh, visit me in dreams, for thus
Thou wilt rejoice my heart, since sweet it is
To see one's friends if e'er they come at night.

If Orpheus' tongue and melody were mine
And I could charm Persephone, or win
Her spouse, and lead thee out of Hades, then
Not even Cerberus nor ghostly Charon
Could keep me from returning thee alive
To this glad light. But since 'twas not to be,

Receive me there, when Death o'ertakes me here;
 Prepare my mansion, till I come to thee.
 I bid my servants bury me beside
 Thy corse; the self-same cedar chest shall keep
 Us both, and side by side our forms will lie.
 In death at least I shall not be apart
 From thee, my only true and faithful friend.

CHO. We, too, as friends, will share, oh friend, with thee
 This grief for thy dear wife, our worthy queen.
ALC. Oh, children, ye have heard your father say
 That he will never marry any one
 To govern you, or to dishonor me.

ADM. Again I promise and will keep my word.
ALC. For this receive these children from my arms.
ADM. I take so dear a gift from arms so dear.
ALC. Become their mother and make good my loss.
ADM. Deprived of thee they'll need my mothering.
ALC. Oh children, when I need to live I die.
ADM. Ah me! what shall I do when thou art lost?
ALC. Time will assuage thy grief; the dead are nought.
ADM. I pray thee take me with thee down to death.
ALC. It is enough that I should die for thee.
ADM. O Fates, of what a wife I am deprived!
ALC. Now darkness comes upon my heavy eyes.
ADM. I am undone if thou desertest me.
ALC. Thou mayst consider me as one that's dead.
ADM. Look up and do not leave thy children thus.
ALC. I would not leave them—but—Farewell, Farewell—
ADM. Yet look on them once more!

ALC. I am as nought.
ADM. What! Leavest thou us?
ALC. Farewell! (*Alcestis dies.*)
ADM. Alas, I'm lost!

CH.LEADER. She is gone—Admetus' wife exists no more.

EUMELUS. Oh, mamma dear is gone;
 She doesn't see the sun;
 But leaves me here alone,
 Her little orphaned one!

See, see her hands and eyes;
Father, how still she lies;
O mother, hear me, hear!
It is your little dear
That clings and calls to you,
And climbs to kiss you, too.

ADM. She hears you not, nor sees you. You and I,
Oh children, feel the whip of heavy fate.

EUM. I am too young a child
To lose that guidance mild
That made me reconciled
When mamma spoke and smiled.
My sister here and I
Are suffering and cry
For father's lonely pain.
Oh, father, 'twas in vain
That you brought mamma home,
For ere old age could come
She left us. All our rooms
Grow dark with funeral-glooms.

CHO. Admetus, thou must bear this heavy grief,
For thou art not the first nor last of men
To lose a noble wife; remember too
That all of us are bound, sometime, to die.

ADM. I understand that well; this grief came not
With sudden force; long since I tried its power.
But I will now prepare the funeral.
Ye must remain and sound a requiem
To Hades' King, who heeds no sacrifice.
I bid you men of Thessaly, o'er whom
I rule, to share this common grief for her,
And shear your locks, and put on mourning garb,
And clip, with shining blades, the flowing manes
From necks of single horse and chariot team.
For twelve full months let not the sound of lyre
Or flute be heard within the city walls;
For I shall never carry to the grave
Another friend more dear to me and true.

She well deserves my praise—she died for me.

(*Exeunt.*)

SECOND STASIMON. [Choral Song.]

STROPHE A.

O, Alcestis, light fast failing,
 Gone to Hades' sunless doom,
 Peace we pray, mid our bewailing,
 Fill thy soul, dispelling gloom.
 Once for all let Hades know,
 And let Charon's song confess,
 That he guides o'er the Stygian flow
 The very queen of nobleness.

ANTISTROPHE A.

When the months' fast circling days
 Bring the glad Carneian feast
 And the full moon spreads her rays
 Gleaming o'er the happy East,
 Then the bards in harmony,
 Tuning flute and harp, shall sing,
 Till in deathless praise of thee
 Sparta and glad Athens ring.

STROPHE B.

O for mighty power to save
 Thy sweet life brought home again,
 Back from stern Cocytus' wave
 To the light and love of men.
 Light upon thee fall the clay!
 Thou shalt win an easy grave,
 For thou givest up today
 Life for life, thy lord to save.

ANTISTROPHE B.

No love filled his mother's heart,
 Meager soul his father showed;
 Wretches! shrinking to depart,

For their son, down Hades' road.
 Brightest youth bright future cast—
 But Alcestis paid the price,
 Giving freely to the last,
 Proving love by sacrifice.

THIRD EPISODE.

Enter HERACLES.

HER. Hail, strangers, dwellers in the Pherae lands,
 Is King Admetus in his royal home?

CHO. Hail, Heracles, Admetus is within.
 But what adventure brings thee on thy way
 To travel through Pheraeian Thessaly?

HER. Eurystheus, King of Tiryns, sets my task.

CHO. And whither bound? To what adventure sent?

HER. To Thrace, for Diomedes' famous team.

CHO. Canst thou obtain them? Dost thou know that
 king?

HER. I never yet have been within his realm.

CHO. Thou canst not take those steeds unless thou
 fightest.

HER. No labor is too hard for Heracles.

CHO. Triumphant, thou wilt come; or dead, remain.

HER. It will not be my first fierce contest won.

CHO. What gain is thine, if thou shalt kill their king?

HER. To Tiryns' ruler I shall drive the steeds.

CHO. But it is difficult to bit their jaws.

HER. Not difficult unless they breathe forth fire.

CHO. And they eat men with their devouring mouths.

HER. That were a proper food for wilder beasts.

CHO. There thou shalt see their mangers smeared with
 blood.

HER. Whose son boasts he to be that keeps the steeds?

CHO. A son of Ares, Lord of the Golden Shield.

HER. The sons of Ares always match my fortune
 Which climbs along its hard and uphill course.
 I have to meet them all in fight: at first
 It was Lycaon; Cyncus after that;

Now third 'tis Diomedes and his colts;—
 But none shall ever see Alcmene's son
 Display a trembling arm before his foes.

CHO. But lo! our country's sovereign King, Admetus,
 Now from the palace portals issues forth.

Enter ADMETUS.

ADM. I wish thee joy, O Perseus' son divine.

HER. Joy, too, to thee, Admetus, Thessaly's king.

ADM. No joy is mine, despite thy kind intent.

HER. What means this garb of grief, and close-clipped hair?

ADM. Alas! I must inter my dead today.

HER. May god have brought no trouble to thy children!

ADM. My children in the house are safe and sound.

HER. Thy father died in ripe old age, if dead.

ADM. No doubt; but he still lives, and mother lives.

HER. Thy wife Alcestis hath not caused thee grief?

ADM. I could relate of her a two-fold tale.

HER. Sayst thou that she is dead or yet alive?

ADM. Alive and dead, she complicates my grief.

HER. I do not understand thy riddles, friend.

ADM. Dost thou not know the fate that threatens her?

HER. I know she was to die in place of thee.

ADM. In such a case how can she truly live?

HER. Weep not thy wife until her day shall come.

ADM. If soon to die, then dead! And death ends all!

HER. I hold that life and death are different.

ADM. That is thy point of view; I keep mine own.

HER. Why weep? What dear one of thy home hath died?

ADM. A woman is the one we have in mind.

HER. A stranger, or a woman of thy kin?

ADM. A stranger, yes, but precious in our home.

HER. Why in thy family did this stranger die?

ADM. Her father died and left his orphan here.

HER. Farewell! I would I found thee not so sad.

ADM. What wilt thou do, or what hast thou in mind?

HER. I have in mind to seek another's hearth.

ADM. No, no, my lord, bring not that grief on me.
 HER. But guests are troublesome to hosts in grief.
 ADM. The dead are dead, so welcome to my house,—
 HER. When hosts are sad, then guests ought not to feast.
 ADM. Our guest-rooms lie apart. There shalt thou lodge.
 HER. Nay, let me go! And thanks a thousand times—
 ADM. I must forbid that thou shouldst leave this hearth
 For another's. Slaves, conduct this guest to rooms
 That lie remote; there throw the chambers wide
 And bid the men to make a royal feast;
 But bolt securely all the inner doors—
 It is not fit that guests should hear our groans.

(*Exit HERACLES.*)

CHO. What dost thou, King? Misfortune presses hard,
 And art though mad enough to welcome guests?
 ADM. But if I turned away from home and town
 A guest, and wanderer, would ye praise me more?
 Not so, since thus my trouble were not less,
 But rather I were proved the ruder man.
 So to the griefs already mine add not
 The grief that calls my home inhospitable.
 This prince I always found a noble host
 Whene'er I visited his Argive town.
 CHO. If he who came is such a friend of thine,
 Why hide from him thy present misery?
 ADM. He never would consent to enter here
 If he were well aware how deep I'm pained.
 To some, I think, I seem unwise in this,
 Nor will ye praise me, but be sure my house
 Has never learned to thrust away its guests.

(*Exit*)

THIRD STASIMON. [Choral Song.]

STROPHE A.

CHO. Royal palace, free to strangers,
 Here Apollo deigned to dwell,
 While the cattle from their mangers

Listened to the music-spell
 Of his whistling as he led them
 Down the hillside to the dell,
 Where the pastoral piping fed them
 On the tunes they loved so well.
 Hail Admetus, King Admetus,
 Prince Apollo loved thee well!

ANTISTROPHE A.

There in joy to hear thy singing
 Came the spotted lynxes out
 From the forests, and were bringing
 All the tawny lion-rout.
 With the dappled fawns beside them
 They went dancing round about
 That great harp that mystified them
 And Apollo's music-shout!
 Hail Apollo, Prince Apollo,
 Join with ours thy music-shout!

STROPHE B.

Rich in flocks is King Admetus
 In his palace by the shore,
 Where his fertile plow-lands greet us
 With their harvest's golden store.
 His dominion he extendeth
 From the sunset's darkening door
 To where Pelion's Mountain endeth
 And Aegæan billows pour.
 Hail Admetus, King Admetus,
 We are loyal evermore.

ANTISTROPHE B.

Take the stranger to thy dwelling,
 Where thy wife lies newly dead,
 Hiding all thy tears upwelling
 In the welcomes thou hast said;
 Thus thy nobleness is showing

How a spirit highly bred
Moves to honor, ever knowing
Hopes to bless the day of dread.
Hail Admetus, King Admetus,
Heaven's light is on thee shed!

FOURTH EPISODE.

Enter ADMETUS and the Funeral Train.

ADM. Pheræan men, steadfastly present here,
Already the attendants bear along
The corpse, prepared and clothed for tomb and
pyre.
So ye, as custom is, speak your farewell
To her departing on the last, sad way.

CHORUS-LEADER. I see thy sire approach with aged step
And with him servants bearing in their hands
Adornment for thy wife, fit honors for the dead.

Enter PHERES and his Wife.

PHERES. I come, O son, and share thy sorrowings,
Since no one will dispute that thou hast lost
A noble and a prudent wife. And yet
We needs must bear our grief, though hard to
bear!

Receive this decoration. Let it go
With her beneath the earth. We ought to heap
Much love on her who died for thee, my son,
Who spared my child, nor suffered me to die,
Grieving for thee, in melancholy age.

Most noble she who dared this noble deed!
More glorious grew the life of all her sex
Because of that high deed she dared to do.

O thou who hast preserved my son and me
From destined death, farewell, and mayst thou
find

A due reward in life beyond the grave.
Such unions bless men, or all marriage fails.

ADM. Thou comest to this funeral unbid!

Thy presence here is hateful; for thy gifts
She shall not wear, nor at her burial
Need aught of thine. Ah, that was fitter time
To sympathize with me, when I was doomed!
But then thou stoodst aside, tho' thou wast old,
And didst allow the youthful wife to die.
Yet now canst thou lament my dead and mourn?
Thou wast not truly father of this king,
Nor she my mother, tho' she claims to be.
My so-called parents never gave me birth.
It must be that of slaves' blood I was born
And substituted as this woman's child.
Well didst thou show, when thou wast put to test,
The man within thee. Never may I trace
My pedigree to thee. Thy lack of soul
Hath bad pre-eminence in all the world!
For at thy age and near the bounds of life
Thou couldst not wish, thou couldst not dare, to
die
To save thy son, but hast allowed my wife
To waste away, whom I might justly call
Mine only father and my mother too.
How fair for thee that struggle would have been,
To die for thine own offspring. Short remained,
In any case, the time thou hadst to stay.
Then had I lived with her in after-time
Nor mourned my woes, left single and alone.
Whatever pleasures any man should taste
Thou hast enjoyed. Thy youth was past in power;
I was thy son, and heir to thine estate;
Not childless hadst thou died and left thy home
To strangers. Neither canst thou fairly say
Thou gavest me to die because I paid
Thee not due reverence. I was a son
Who ever honored thee most filially,
And now, for this, such thanks thou renderest!
Thou canst not be too quick in getting sons
To cherish thee when old, and after death

To lay thee out and clothe thee for thy tomb;—
Thou shalt no more depend on me for that,
For I am dead to thee. But if I chance
To find another savior, I will call
Myself his son and the prop of his old age.

The aged idly pray that death may come,
Find fault with years and the long decline of life;
But, when death nears, their wish to die is gone
And hoary age no longer is a burden.

CHO. Be still. Sufficient is the trouble now;
Urge not thy father till his passion rage.

PHERES. Whom thinkst thou, son, that thou art hounding
thus

With speech of impudence? Some Lydian slave
Or Phrygian bought in barter? Knowst thou not
I am Thessalian? Born of parents free,
Thessalians too? Thou art grown insolent.
But hurling boyish taunts thou shalt not strike
And go unstruck. I got and reared thee lord
Of Pheres' palace. Duty does not bid
That I should die for thee. Ancestral law
And legislation of the Grecian states
Ne'er made a father die to save his son.
For good or bad thy life is all thine own.
What Fortune gave thee, that is thine to keep,
With sovereign sway o'er many men. I leave
Besides unmeasured lands to thee. 'Tis right,
For thus my father left the same to me.
In what respect, then, have I done thee wrong?
Thou needst not die for me nor I for thee.
Thou lovest the light. Is light not dear to me?
Long lasts our time of darkness after death;
The time of life, how short, and yet how sweet!
Thou shamelessly hast sought to escape from
death
And hast outlived the allotted span of life
By slaying *her*. Then call'st thou me a coward?
Thou craven, weaker than thy wife who gave

Her life in barter for thy fine young soul!
Why, thou needst never die! At any time
Thou mayst persuade new wives to die for thee.
And now, though fearing death thyself, shalt thou
Revile the friends who would not take thy place?
Be still! Consider, if thou lovest thy life,
All men love theirs. If thou speak ill of us,
Truths many and unwelcome thou shalt hear.

CHO. Too much reviling now and heretofore!
Desist, old man, cease thy vituperations.
ADM. Speak on. I've had my say. And if the truth
Is hateful, thou shouldst not have sinned toward
me.

PHE. In dying for thee, I would have sinned far worse.
ADM. Is it the same for young and old to die?
PHE. I claim men ought to live one life, not two.
ADM. But thou, it seems, wouldst outlive Zeus himself.
PHE. Dost curse thy parents? We did thee no harm.
ADM. I curse thee for thy fondness for long life.
PHE. Is not this corpse borne forth instead of thine?
ADM. No; as a sign of thy faint-heartedness.
PHE. She did not die for us; thou'l not say that.
ADM. Enough!
May'st thou come some day to dire need of me!
PHE. Wed many women, that the more may die.
ADM. The blame is thine; thou didst refuse the death.
PHE. Because this Sun-god's light is dear to me.
ADM. A craven's soul is thine and not a man's.
PHE. I have not given thee my corpse to mock!
ADM. When death doth near thee thou shalt die
disgraced.
PHE. When I have died, I'll care not for disgrace.
ADM. Ye gods! old age is full of shamelessness.
PHE. She was not shameless, no; but witless rather.
ADM. Go hence, and let me bury this dear woman.
PHE. I go, and thou who alone hast murdered her,
Alone must lay her underneath the sod.
But thou hast yet to satisfy her brother;

No longer be Acastus deemed a man
Till he avenge his sister's blood with thine.
ADM. Mayst thou and thy companion go accursed,
And childless, as ye well deserve, grow old.
Although I am your son, and still alive,
Come not with me beneath a common roof.

(*Exeunt PHERES and his Wife.*)

If there were need of such formality
I formally renounce my childhood's home!
But let us now proceed, and lift the corse
Which resteth at our feet. On to the tomb!

(Exit.)

FUNERAL PROCESSIONAL

CHO. Oh farewell, ah farewell,
Noble lady, dearest, best;
Where thou goest now to dwell
May the Death-gods grant thee rest;
And if favors over there
Wait the pious dead alone,
Mayst thou have thy blessed share
And thy seat by Hades' throne!
Oh farewell, ah farewell,
Oh farewell, ah farewell. (Exeunt.)

(Enter a Man-servant)

SERVANT. From many distant lands have come the guests
Whom I have fed within Admetus' home;
But never yet have I received for him
So mannerless a guest as now hath come;
For though he saw the master's funeral woe,
He still dared enter at our open gates,
And then with our misfortunes clear in mind
He, tactless, took the dainties we could serve;
While, if we loitered with the dish he wished,
He roared that we should fetch it him at once,
Then takes the wreathed goblet in his hands
And drinks the liquor of the vineyard down

Until the flame of wine is in his brain.
 He twines his head with sprigs of myrtle-boughs
 And howls a song that is no song at all.
 Then one might hear two tunes, for heedlessly
 Amid Admetus' sorrows he did sing, while we
 Attendants wailed our mistress' dirge and wept,
 But showed the guest no traces of our tears,
 Since thus Admetus had enjoined on us.

So in this house I have to entertain
 A guest that proves some knave and vagabond;
 And while my mistress goes her last sad way
 I cannot follow in the funeral train
 Nor raise my hand and voice lamentingly
 For her who was a mother to us slaves,
 And often she hath meekly shielded us
 From passions of her husband. Is it wrong
 For me to hate our guest in times like these?

Enter HERACLES.

HER. Ho! Why this sad and melancholy look?
 The servant needs no long face for the guest;
 He should receive his man with cheery soul.
 But thou, although thou seest thy master's friend,
 Wouldst welcome him with wrinkling, gloomy brow
 Just for some sorrow that concerns thee not.

Come here, and thou shalt grow a wiser man.
 Canst thou philosophize on mortal things?
 I think not; for how couldst thou? Learn from
 me:

Death is a debt all mortals have to pay,
 And none of them is wise enough to know
 If he shall live to see to-morrow come,
 Because the paths of fortune run obscure,—
 Her courses are not taught in any school.
 Now hear my words and take advice from me:
 Rejoice, be glad, drink, count this day-by-day
 Existence thine, all else belongs to Chance!
 Revere the goddess Venus, far most sweet
 To mortal man,—a kindly goddess, she!

Let all else pass, and heed what I have said
If I have spoken sense—I think I have!

Come, wilt thou not dismiss such heavy griefs,
And passing though the door with wreathed brow
Drink wine with me? For well I know, my friend,
Theplash of falling liquor in the cup
Will change thy downcast, dismal look to joy.
We mortals ought to think our mortal thoughts,
For to all solemn men with scowling brows,
If it were left for me to judge, I'd say,
Life is not truly life but misery.

SERV. We understand all that, but deal with facts
Unfitting revelry or laughing speech.

HER. Well, she who died was from beyond your gates;
Grieve not, the master and the mistress live.

SERV. Live! How? Dost thou not know the sorrow
here?

HER. I do; unless thy lord hath lied to me.

SERV. Too truly he is far too fond of guests.

HER. Need he for alien dead mistreat a friend?

SERV. Too little alien to this house was she.

HER. Had he some sorrow that he told me not?

SERV. Farewell! Go forth! My master's woes are mine.

HER. This tone doth not befit an alien woe.

SERV. If alien, I would not have jarred thy glee.

HER. Have I received false treatment from my friend?

SERV. You came untimely to be entertained.
We sorrow now. You saw the shaven heads,
Dark robes of death and—

HER. Who is the dead? A child?
Or has the aged father passed away?

SERV. Not so, oh guest, Admetus' wife hath died.

HER. The wife! and could ye entertain me still?

SERV. He was ashamed to turn thee from his door.

HER. O hapless man! How great for thee this loss!

SERV. Not she alone, but we as well have died.

HER. Ah well I wondered when I saw the face,
The shaven head, and eyes bedewed with tears.—

He said he carried to the grave a dame
 Who lived with him, and thus he put me off.
 Against my will I entered his abode
 And feasted of his hospitality
 While he was thus employed. Shall I wear
 wreaths
 And sing to Bacchus songs of revelry?

I blame thee, for thou shouldst have told me all—
 How Death's dark pall was hanging o'er the house.
 Where doth he bury her? Will he be there?

SERV. The path is straight down the Larissa road.
 There thou shalt find the suburb sepulcher.

HER. O ever laboring heart and hand of mine,
 Now prove the son Alcmene bore to Zeus!
 Thy duty is to bring the dead to life
 And place Alcestis in this home again;
 Thus shall I render service to the king.
 Behold, I go to lie in wait for Death,
 The black-gowned god. I shall find him now, I
 think,

Drinking the sacrifices near the tomb.
 And if I lie in wait for him and spring
 And seize him from my ambuscade and throw
 These arms encircling round the hated god,
 No man could ever snatch away my prey,
 Though struggling,—till he has surrendered her.
 But should Death come not to his clotted meal
 And thus my hunt be vain, I shall descend
 To those unlighted homes, where dwell the
 shades,—

To Persephone and her king; and there demand
 And trust to lead Alcestis to the light,
 And place her in the arms of my good host
 Who hesitated not to welcome me
 Though tribulation rested over him.
 Respecting me, he nobly hid his grief.
 What man in Thessaly, or who in Greece
 More kind to friends than King Admetus is?

Therefore he shall not say he entertained
A guest ungrateful for his nobleness.

(*Exit.*)

Enter ADMETUS returning with the mourners.

ADM. Oh ye hateful approaches and hated shape
Of this widowed house whence we mourn the
escape
Of the soul of the mistress! Ah, me! Alas!
Shall I cry or be silent? Stand stolid or pass
To the door that beholds my undoing?
My mother has had an unfortunate son,—
So I envy the ghosts, and my heart dotes upon
A far-away home in the palace of Death,
For earth hath no joy in its light or its breath;
Its sun hath no brightness; its paths have no
pleasure,
For Hades and Death made away with the
treasure
That the love of my soul was pursuing.

CHO. On! On! Seek thy hall!

ADM. Woe! Woe!

CHO. Thy woes crushing fall.

ADM. Ah! Ah!

CHO. Though tears thou mayst shed,

ADM. Alas!

CHO. They help not the dead.

ADM. Ah me! Ah me!

CHO. To see thy loved one's beauty never again,
That is my destiny—and that thy pain.

ADM. Ye touch me where my very soul is sore;
A man's worst sorrow is to see no more
His faithful wife. 'T were better ne'er to have led
My lady homeward on the day I wed.
I envy him who has nor wife nor child
To aggravate his simple lot with wild
Calamity and sorrow sure to come
And blight the wedding joys that make his home.

Why need a man endure such deep distress
Who might have lived in single blessedness?

CHO. 'Neath Fate's arm low bending!

ADM. Woe! Woe!

CHO. In woes never ending—

ADM. Ah! Ah!

CHO. Yet baffle the weight

ADM. Alas!

CHO. And hardness of Fate,

ADM. Ah me! Ah me!

CHO. For thou art not the first to lose a wife;
Such loss is common to our mortal life.

ADM. Oh, too common the sorrow, too bitter the grief
For the loved ones we bury! Ah, why did ye
keep

Me from throwing myself in despair of relief

To the deep of the tomb of the dear one asleep
To awaken no more, by the side of the chief

Of all women to lie? For thus Death, at one
sweep,

Would have taken two souls of the faithful to
keep.

CH.LEADER. I had a kinsman once whose only son had died,
A worthy lad, just showing youth's bright
bloom;

And yet my kinsman bore the blow,—was paci-
fied,

Though gray in age and tottering to his tomb.

ADM. Oh, shadow of home, can I enter within?
Can I live where I know that the life that has been
Cometh never again? How the message of fate
Has changed since the day when with songs at
my gate

And bright wedding torches I led by the hand
My sweet wife to my door! Then the gay, noisy
band

Of young revelers followed the glad way we went
To praise our high fortune and noble descent;—

Now dirges and groanings are sounding instead
Of the hymns hymeneal. I am solemnly led
By the black-veiled attendants who beckon me on
To the chamber of love I must enter alone.

CHO. So close to thy prosperity thy trial came
It found thee inexperienced in grief;
But thou shalt live to know all men have felt the
same

Sad loss,—whose commonness is its relief.

ADM. Oh, friends! More fortunate her lot than mine,
It seems to me—perhaps to others not—
Indeed, no grief will ever touch her now;
From many sorrows she is nobly freed,
But I unjustly miss my destined fate;
I still live on—at last I understand!
Can I, alone, return to this drear home?
Whom shall I greet? By whom be greeted there?
A happy entrance can I find? Where turn?
Within, drear emptiness takes hold of me
To see the seats where she was wont to sit,
The unkept house, the floors left dusty now;
The children round my knees lament their loss,
And servants with them for their mistress mourn.
Such troubles are at home, and when I turn
Mine eyes to view my realm, I shall behold
Thessalian nuptials filling all the land
And see companions of my own lost wife
In gatherings of joy. Hard to endure
Will be my life amid their happiness.
Whoever is mine enemy will say,
“He lives! A coward, for he dared not die,
“But gave the life of his own wedded wife,
“To save his soul from Hades’ dark domain.
“Does he appear to be a man? He hates
“His parents, for he feared to die himself.”
If such repute is mine beside my woe,
What glory can it be for me to live—
With evil fortune and an evil name?

FOURTH STASIMON. [Choral Song.]
STROPHE A.

We've pondered deep and voyaged around
 This earth on land and sea,
 Yet nothing stronger have we found
 Than stern NECESSITY.
 We know no mystic medicine
 Nor drug by Phoebus given;
 The fates of weary men are in
 The high decree of Heaven!

ANTISTROPHE A.

Fate hears no prayers by mortals said;
 No altars smoke to her;
 Ere Zeus may bend a gracious head
 He must with her confer.
 No metals of the deepest mines
 Are strong enough for Fate.
 No gracious gentleness refines
 Her adamantine hate.

STROPHE B.

Bear up! No tears can ever raise
 Our dead to life and light.
 The very sons of God we praise
 Go darkling in Death's night.
 Right dear she was while still with us,
 And dear in death shall be,
 Most noble and most generous,
 The wife that died for thee!

ANTISTROPHE B.

Let not her tomb unhonored lie,
 But stand a temple fair.
 A height where many a passer-by
 Shall offer up this prayer:
 "Ah, once this gentle lady died
 To save her lord my king;

Now may her spirit glorified
Attend the prayer I bring!"

EXODOS.

CH.LEADER. Now, as I think, Alcmena's son, oh King,
Comes back to claim thine hospitality.

Enter HERACLES with ALCESTIS Veiled.

HER. Before a friend one ought to speak the truth,
Admetus, not to hide away one's woe
And cause for grief within a silent breast.
I deemed myself a trusted friend of thine,
Worthy of knowing thy calamities.
Thou didst not tell me 'twas thy wife had died
But to thy home receivedst me, all as though
The dead one were a stranger at thy hearth.
So while thou wast bowed down with such a grief
I crowned my head, and in this saddened house
I made libations to the gods of drink.
Blame should be thine for treating thus thy
friend;
Yet I would not add blame to misery.
Now hear the reason why I turned my steps
And came again to thy bereaved abode:
This woman keep for me till I return,
Leading from wintry Thrace the steeds I seek,
When I have slain the great Bistonian king.
But if I die—as Zeus grant I may not,
But may my father grant a safe return!
I give her thee to serve within thy home.
I won her with a struggle as thou shalt hear,
For on my way I found a town engaged
In holding contests of their athletes' prowess;
From thence I won and brought away my prize.
To those who conquered in the lighter games
Horses were given; for the heavier sports,
Boxing and wrestling, cattle were the prize,
And with the cattle came the woman too.

As I was passing, how could I neglect
The opportunity? So, as I said,
Be careful of this lady. I stole her not,
But won her by the wrestling of these arms.
Some day, perhaps, thou wilt approve my gift.

ADM. 'Twas not dishonoring or hating thee
I hid the sad misfortune of my wife;
But it had been a grief upon a grief
If thou hadst gone to bide with other host.
Enough to mourn a sorrow of mine own.

As for the woman, I beseech thee, prince,
Find, if thou canst, some man of Thessaly—
And thou hast multitudes of Pherae-friends—
Find one (who hath not lost what I have lost)
To take and keep this woman safe for thee,
Lest thou remind me of calamity.

I could not keep from weeping should I see
Her in my halls. Add not disease to one
Diseased; for now I am weighed down enough
With hard misfortune. Where in all the house
Could we bestow so beautiful a woman?
By her attire she shows that she is young;
Then shall she share my palace with my men?
Nay; how could she dwell purely with them here?
I have regard to the safety of thy prize,
And young men's hearts, oh Heracles, are wild!
Shall I maintain her in my dead wife's rooms?
How could I bid her take that bridal couch?
For that I fear a censure doubly just,
Both from the town, a charge that I
Am traitor to the wife who worked my weal,
And from the dead, well worth my reverence.
With caution must I guard my words and deeds.

But thou, O lady, whosoe'er thou art,
Remindest me in form and gentle mien
Of my Alcestis.—Take her from my sight!
Slay not the slain. As I behold her there
I seem to see my wife before my face.

She grieves my heart, and from my welling eyes
The tears of anguish flow. It is at last
My lot to know the bitterness of loss!

CHO. I could not call thy lot a happy one,
But one must bear, however fortune leads,
The trials laid upon him by the gods.

HER. Oh that I had the power to end thy grief,
And bring thy wife from Hades' nether halls
To see again the glorious light of life!
How freely would I take the risk for thee.

ADM. I know that thou wouldest wish it. What of that?
The dead come never to life's light again.

HER. Be not excessive. Sturdily bear up!

ADM. 'Tis easier to advise "bear up" than bear.

HER. What wouldest thou gain shouldst thou persist in
grief?

ADM. 'Tis not for gain. My passion leads me on!

HER. To love the dead thrusts on a man to tears—

ADM. And ruins me and—more than I can tell.

HER. Thou hast lost a noble wife. Who would deny?

ADM. So that I care no longer for my life.

HER. Ah, time will heal; thy misery is new.

ADM. Yea, time may heal, if the Time thou mean'st be
Death.

HER. A wife and other loves will comfort thee.

ADM. Hush! How thou speakest! There my mind re-
volts.

HER. Revolts? Not wed—but keep a widowed couch?

ADM. No wife shall ever lie beside this man.

HER. That vow can never help the dead at all.

ADM. I ought to honor her where'er she is.

HER. I praise thee, but the world will call thee fool.

ADM. Ay, call me fool, but bridegroom call me not.

HER. I praise thee, thou art faithful to thy wife.

ADM. When I forsake her may I meet my death.

HER. Well, take this slave of mine within the house.

ADM. No, by thy father Zeus, I beg of thee.

HER. If thou dost not, it is thine own mistake.

ADM. But, if I do, I sting my heart with woe.
HER. Obey! This favor may a duty prove.
ADM. Ah me! Would thou hadst never won the prize.
HER. But, since I won, my prize is thine as well.
ADM. Thy words are fair, but let the woman go.
HER. She goes if go she must, but must she go?
ADM. She must, unless her going angers thee.
HER. I know a thing thou dost not; so insist.
ADM. I yield, although I am unwilling still.
HER. Sometime thou wilt thank me for it; now obey.
ADM. Then, servants, take her in, if this must be.
HER. To servants I shall not entrust this prize.
ADM. Then take the woman to the house thyself.
HER. Not I, but thou shalt lead her to thy door.
ADM. I will not touch her; let her go alone.
HER. To thy right arm alone I hand her safe.
ADM. Compelled by thee, I act against my will.
HER. Take heart; stretch forth thy hand and touch thy guest.
ADM. I stretch my hand but turn my head away
As though there were a Gorgon's head to see!
HER. You have her?
ADM. Yes.
HER. Keep her in safety then!
Count Heracles a guest both kind and good.
But glance at her and see if she doth still
Resemble thy dear wife. Methinks she doth;
Then let thy grief turn joy and happiness.
ADM. Ye gods! What shall I say? A miracle!
Nay, mocking gods have sent an empty joy.
HER. Not so, thou dost behold thy very wife.
ADM. I fear thou'st brought some phantom from the shades.
HER. Thou never knewst me juggle with their ghosts.
ADM. It cannot be the wife whom I entombed.
HER. I do not marvel at thy lack of faith.
ADM. But may I speak and touch her as I used?
HER. Yes, speak. For thou hast all thou didst desire.

ADM. Oh face and form the dearest and the best,
I have thee,—a vision I had dared not hope.

HER. Thou hast her; may there be no jealous gods!

ADM. O noble son of greatest Zeus, I pray
That happiness be thine; thy sire I pray
To keep thee safely. Thou alone restoredst
Mine own to me. But tell me how thou broughtest
The dead from darkness to the light of life.

HER. By joining battle with the god of Death.

ADM. Come, tell the story of thy fight with Death.

HER. I hid me by the tomb and clutched him there.

ADM. Why stands she thus in silent revery?

HER. Thou hast no right to hear her voice until,
Released from the nether gods by offerings
And purifying rites which she shall make,
The third day comes and she is free to speak.
But lead thy wife within and honest still
In future days, Admetus, have regard
To all thy guests. Farewell. I go to do
The labor that my lord Eurystheus bids.

ADM. Good friend, remain with us and share our hearth.

HER. Some time I may, I now must hasten on.

ADM. Success be thine, I pray, and mayst thou come
With homeward joy. Let citizens in all
The land make dances for our fortune turned
By thee from bad to good. Let altars reek
With blood in purifying sacrifice.
We must confess that now we set our lives
To happier harmonies than heretofore.

CHO. Oh many the changes that Fortune may bring,
And to us who are faithless the gods love to fling
The gifts we despair of in long suffering,
To reveal us our hope while we hopelessly sing.—
So endeth our song for our queen and our king.

